

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-11 OMB-01 ACDA-05 SAJ-01 SAM-01 EB-07

OES-03 FEA-01 TRSE-00 (ISO) W
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R 141000Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6097

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TOKYO 0582

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINR, EGEN, VN, LA,CB. JA

SUBJECT JAPAN-INDOCHINESE RELATIONS: VISIT BY FONOFF OFFICIAL TO
LAOS AND DRV

SUMMARY: DURING RECENT VISIT TO LAOS AND DRV, FONOFF
OFFICIAL FOUND CONSPICUOUS RUSSIAN PRENCE AND NORTH
VIETNAMESE INFLUENCE IN VIENTIANE'S "LETHARGIC
REVOLUTION." IN CONTRAST TO BOTH VIENTIANE AND
PEKING, WHICH HE VISITED LATER, NVN WAS TIGHTLY
CONTROLLED AND DISCIPLINED. HE SAW NO EVIDENCE OF
US BOMBING NOR OF CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY. RUSSIANS
APPROVED TO BE FAVORED ALLY IN DRV. IN HANOI, THE
OFFICIAL DISCUSSED BILATERAL ISSUES, INCLUDING IMPROVEMENT
OF JAPANESE EMBASSY FACILITIES, AND RESUMPTION OF OIL
EXPLORATION. HE FAILED A FINAL OBJECTIVE - TO VISIT
SAIGON. NORTH VIETNAMESE ASSERTED READINESS TO RESUME
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OIL EXPLORATION AND DRILLING WITH PARTICIPATION BY
FOREIGN FIRMS FROM "FRIENDLY" COUNTRIES, EXCLUDING,

THE OFFICIAL SURMISED, THE US. RIGHTS MUST BE RENEGOTIATED
AND DRV AGREED TO NEGOTIATIONS WITH JAPANESE EMBASSY.
ON OTHER ECONOMIC ISSUES, DRV SEEMS PREPARED TO EXPAND
EXPORT OF COAL TO JAPAN BUT UNWILLING TO REPAY
ANY OF GVN'S \$50 MILLION DEBT TO JAPAN.
END SUMMARY.

1. TO RECENT FONOFF TRAVELER, HEAVY SOVIET PRESENCE BUT DRV
INFLUENCE CHARACTERIZED LAOS, STRICT CONTROLS AND DISCIPLINE
RULED THE DRV, AND THE PRC APPEARED LIKE THE "FREE WORLD" BY
COMPARISON.

FIRST SEA ASIA DEPDIR TSUKADA PROVIDED US FOLLOWING
BRIEFING AND IMPRESSIONS FROM HIS THREE DAYS IN LAOS
AND SIX IN NVN, ENDING DEC 18.

2. LAOS. ARRIVING DEC 7, TSUKADA FOUND KING VATTHANA'S
PICTURE STILL HANGING IN HOTEL CORRIDOR. IT DISAPPEARED
THE NEXT DAY. TSUKADA FOUND SOVIET INFLUENCE AND
PRESENCE UBIQUITOUS AND OPPRESSIVE. NEVERTHELESS,
THE NORTH VIETNAMESE APPEAR IN CHARGE OF WHAT TSUKADA
DESCRIBED AS A LETHARGIC LAOTIAN REVOLUTION. HE GAINED
NO INSIGHTS INTO LAOTIAN ATTITUDES TOWARD FUTURE
RELATIONS WITH US BUT BELIEVES THAT US AND JAPAN
MUST TRY TO "OUT ENDURE" THE NEW REGIME. GOJ AMBASSADOR
SUGANUMA EXPRESSED GREAT ADMIRATION FOR AMERICAN
EMBASSY IN VIENTIANE UNDER LEADERSHIP OF CHARGE
CORCORAN. AMERICANS WERE "BRAVELY ENDURING" HARD-
SHIPS "LIKE AMERICANS," SUGANUMA TOLD TSUKADA.
TSUKADA ALSO COMMENTED PERSONALLY THAT HE THOUGHT IN
RETROSPECT US HAD WISELY WITHDRAWN FROM NAM NGUM II
DAM PROJECT. IN CONTRAST, JAPAN, AFTER RECOMMITMENT
TO PROJECT, WAS SERIOUSLY EMBARRASSED BY SUDDEN
CHANGES IN NATURE OF LAOTIAN GOVT BUT IT IS NOW TOO
LATE TO WITHDRAW.

3. DRV. TSUKADA CONDUCTED EXTENSIVE TALKS WITH
ASIAN BUREAU DIRGEN THANH. IN CONTRAST TO THANH'S
"BEASTLY BEHAVIOR" AS NEGOTIATOR FOR HANOI OF DRV-
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JAPAN RELATIONS, TSUKADA SAID DURING RECENT VISIT
THANH WAS VERY FRIENDLY AND CORDIAL. TSUKADA HAD
SEVERAL PURPOSES IN HANOI: A) TO TRY TO IMPROVE
LOGISTICS, HOUSING ETC. OF THE JAPANESE EMBASSY;
B) TO HOLD SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSIONS WITH DRV
OFFICIALS; C) TO TRY TO VISIT SAIGON; D) TO DISCUSS
RESUMPTION OF OIL EXPLORATION (REPORTED PARA 7
BELOW). HE MADE SOME PROGRESS ON THE FIRST TWO
OBJECTIVES BUT NOT THE THIRD. THANH INSISTED THAT

PRIOR TO REUNIFICATION PRG REP IN HANOI NGUYEN VAN TIEN WAS THE APPROPRIATE PERSON WITH WHOM TO DISCUSS A VISIT TO SAIGON. TSUKADA INSISTED WITH THANH THAT HANOI WAS IN CHARGE OF ALL VN AND ASKED THAT ARRANGEMENTS BE MADE FOR HIM TO GO TO SAIGON TO CHECK ON WELFARE OF THE JAPANESE EMBASSY PERSONNEL. HE FAILED.

4. TSUKADA COULD DETECT LITTLE FROM TLAKS ABOUT DRV INTENTIONS TOWARD THAILAND OR THE SINO-SOVIET RIVALRY FOR HANOI'S FAVOR. NEVERTHELESS, HE SAW WHAT HE REGARDED AS CONSIDERABLE EVIDENCE THAT THE RUSSIANS WERE THE FAVORED ALLY. AS AN EXAMPLE, HE NOTED THAT THE SOVIET EMBASSY AND RESIDENCES OCCUPY THREE BLOCKS ADJACENT TO HANOI'S CEREMONIAL SQUARE (WHERE HO CHI MINH'S MAUSOLEUM IS LOCATED). OTHER "SOCIALIST" EMBASSIES, WITH THE CHINESE MERELY AMONG THEM, TAKE UP THE NEXT BLOCK OF DIPLOMATIC SPACE, FOLLOWED BY OTHER FRIENDLY NATIONS. TSUKADA SAID THERE WERE MANY OTHER EXAMPLES OF SPECIAL TREATMENT FOR THE RUSSIANS, INCLUDING SUCH PRIVILEGES AS PERMISSION FOR SOVIET DIPLOMATS TO DRIVE THEIR PRIVATE AUTOMOBILES THEMSELVES.

5. US WAS GIVEN STANDARD TREATMENT WITH NORTH VIETNAMESE CALLING FOR US "TO HONOR PARIS ACCORDS AND HEAL WOUNDS OF WAR."

5. TSUKADA FOUND HANOI BEAUTIFUL AND AN ENVIRONMENTALIST'S DREAM, REMINISCENT OF RURAL JAPAN IN THE LATE FORTIES. HOWEVER, STANDARDS OF LIVING APPEARED TO BE MUCH LOWER THAN IN PEKING. FOOD SEEMED ADEQUATE BUT
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BEER, TSUKADA SAID, TASTED "BITTER LIKE BULGARIAN HORSE URINE." SECURITY CONTROLS WERE VERY EVIDENT (MORE SO THAN IN PEKING HE THOUGHT) AND REGULATIONS MUCH STRICTER. HE NOTED FOR EXAMPLE THAT DIPLOMATS (EXCEPT RUSSIANS APPARENTLY) ARE REQUIRED TO PASS A WRITTEN DRIVING TESTS IN VIETNAMESE, A FEAT ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO ACCOMPLISH.

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-11 OMB-01 SAI-01 ACDA-05 SAM-01 EB-07

OES-03 FEA-01 TRSE-00 (ISO) W

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R 141000Z JAN 76 ZDK

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6098

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

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6. TSUKADA ALSO VISITED THE NE SECTION OF HANOI,
DROVE BY EMBASSY CAR TO HAIPHONG, VISITING THE
HARBOR, AND THEN TO QUANG YEN AND HON GAI ALONG THE

HA LONG BAY, WHERE HITACHI PLANS TO BUILD A FERTILIZER
FACTORY. DURING THE ENTIRE VISIT HE SAW NO EVIDENCE
OF DAMAGE FROM US BOMBING. THERE WAS ALSO NO EVIDENCE
OF ANY CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY. SEVERAL SOVIET AND
CHINESE SHIPS WERE IN HAI PHONG HARBOR BUT THERE
WAS NO EVIDENCE OF LOADING OR UNLOADING UNDERWAY.
HARBOR HAD NO MECHANIZED FACILITIES, SUCH AS CRANES.
DRV FONOFF INSTRUCTED JAPANESE TO FLY JAPANESE FLAG FROM
CAR DURING TRAVELS AND AT EACH STOP A CROWD OF CURIOUS
VIETNAMESE GATHERED. JAPANESE WERE REPEATEDLY TAKEN
FOR CUBANS AND VIETNAMESE SEEMED SURPRISED TO FIND
JAPANESE TOURING THEIR COUNTRYSIDE. ONE YOUNG
SOLDIER TOLD THEM THE LAST TIME THE JAPANESE HAD
BEEN THERE WAS WHEN THEY THREW OUT FRENCH COLONIALISTS
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IN 1937.

7. ANOTHER PRIME PURPOSE OF TSUKADA'S TRIP WAS TO INITIATE DISCUSSIONS ABOUT PETROLEUM EXPLORATION AND DRILLING BY FOREIGN (JAPANESE) FIRMS WITH THE GDRV OIL AND EXPLORATION FOR BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH VIETNAM, AGENCY DIRECTOR INFORMED TSUKADA THAT DRV WAS WILLING AND ANXIOUS TO RESUME EXPLORATION OFF BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH VIETNAM. HANOI WELCOMES "FRIENDLY" FOREIGN PARTICIPATION. ALTHOUGH NOT STATED EXPLICITLY, TSUKADA SURMISED THAT "FRIENDLY" MEANT JAPAN, FRANCE, ETC., OR ANYONE BUT THE US. VIETNAMESE WILL INSIST ON RENEGOTIATION OF EXPLORATION AND DRILLING RIGHTS BUT TSUKADA IS UNSURE WHETHER ADDITIONAL PAYMENT FOR RIGHTS WILL BE RWQUIRED FOR FIRMS WHO HELD RIGHTS WITH FORMER GVN. HANOI AGREED TO EARLY RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS THROUGH GOJ EMBASSY IN HANOI.

8. GENERALLY, TSUKADA SAID HANOI, LIKE OTHER COMMUNIST GOVTS, PREFERS GOVT-TO-GOVT BUSINESS DEALINGS AND SITRUSTS PRIVATE FIRMS. TSUKADA MADE EFFORTS TO CONVINCE THE VIETNAMESE THAT JAPANESE BUSINESS IS AS RELIABLE AS THE GOJ. NEVERTHELESS, HE BELIEVES THE GOJ AND KEIDANREN WILL PROBABLY BEAR MOST OF THE ECONOMIC/ COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC WITH VN IN NEAR FUTURE. HON GAI COAL APPEARS TO BE HANOI'S ONLY MARKETABLE COMMODITY (TSUKADA PRESUMABLY FORGOT CAPTURED US WEAPONRY), AND HE ASSUMES EXPORT WILL BE STEPPED UP, INCLUDING TO JAPAN. CURRENT INCOME FROMCOAL, ACCORDING TO TSUKADA, AMOUNTS TO US \$300 MILLION ANNUALLY.

9. JAPANESE PRESS HAS GARBLED QUESTION OF REPAYMENT OF CREDITS EXTENDED BY GOJ TO FORMER GVN. TSUKADA COMMENTED THAT GOJ WOULD BE WILLING TO DISCUSS THE QUESTION WITH ANYONE WILLING BUT THERE IS NO GOVERNMENT IN SVN AND HANOI IS UNWILLING TO DISCUSS THE MATTER. TSUKADA NOTED THAT GOJ WOULD ATTEMPT TO NEGOTIATE REPAYMENT WITH HANOI ON BASIS OF REUNIFICATION OF VN. GOJ PUBLICLY "HOPES" TO RECOVER AT LEAST SOME OF THESE FUNDS. TSUKADA ADMITTED HE WAS SKEPTICAL ANY OF THE FUNDS (ABOUT US \$50 MILLION) WOULD BE RETRIEVED. HODGSON
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